

SPEECH

OF

HON. E. G. SPAULDING, OF NEW YORK,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1851,

On the Bill reported from the Committee on Commerce, making appropriations for the improvement of certain Rivers and Harbors.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, (Mr. MEADE in the chair,) on the bill making appropriations for the improvement of rivers and harbors—

Mr. SPAULDING said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: My constituents feel a deep interest in this question, and I should be derelict in duty if I did not do all that I could to favor its passage. Sir, not only are my constituents interested in this subject, but the Lake region generally—the Valley of the Mississippi, and indeed the whole country. It is a bill that is intended to benefit the North, the South, the East, and the West, and to cement more closely the bond of union between all these sections of the country.

Sir, it is carrying forward a system of improvements that was commenced under General Washington in 1789, and, with some modifications, continued down to the present time. It has been characterized by gentlemen on the other side of the House as intended to rob the Treasury—as being intended to break down the Treasury of the country by a general system of internal improvements. The gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. MORSE] has so characterized it. He says it is calculated to uproot the foundations of government—that it is not authorized by the Constitution—that it is local and sectional in its character, and that for these and many other reasons it ought not to pass. Now, the gentleman from Indiana, [Mr. FITCH,] who has just taken his seat, has, in my opinion, to a great extent, answered the objections of the gentleman from Louisiana. It has been said, also, that this was not a Democratic measure. Sir, I agree with the gentleman from Indiana that this bill is not the creature of any party, or of any section of country; it is emphatically a national measure, designed for the benefit of the whole country, without reference to party. I can prove by acts of Congress, conclusively, that this system of internal improvements had its origin with the first session of Congress under the Constitution; that provision was made by that very Congress similar to those contained in this bill; and the system has grown up with our Government from that time to the present day.

Sir, previous to the first session of Congress, in 1789, all the light-houses, beacons, buoys, and public piers on the Atlantic coast and the harbors, bays, and inlets of the several States, had been built and maintained by such States respectively, or by the local authority of the cities and towns in which they were situated. On the adoption of the Constitution, the separated States became *one country*, without regard to State lines, for great national objects specified in the Constitution. For the common good of all the States, each State surrendered a portion of its sovereignty under the Constitution to the General Government, and expressly prohibited the separate States from exercising certain powers, among which was a provision that “no State, without the consent of Congress, should lay any duty of tonnage,” and “vessels bound to or from one State shall not be obliged to enter, clear, or pay duties in another.”

The Constitution expressly confers on Congress the power

“To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States.”

“To provide and maintain a Navy.”

“To raise and support armies.”

“To establish post offices and post roads.”

“To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes.”

“To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers.”

This broad power “to provide and maintain a Navy,” confers on Congress the incidental power to establish docks and navy-yards, where the ships and vessels of the United States may be built; to equip and man them when built, and to provide lights, beacons, buoys, and public piers, to enable them to sail along the coast, and enter the bays, harbors, and rivers of the country in safety, for purposes of defence in time of war, and at all times to protect our commercial marine. The United States Government is also bound to maintain an Army for the protection of the whole country, and to establish post offices and post roads. To do this effectually, troops and munitions of war, as well as the mails, must be transported to the remotest corners of this nation. Good roads, ca-

nals, harbors, and the unobstructed navigation of rivers, would enable the Government to carry the mails with dispatch at all times, and in case of war to concentrate promptly and cheaply, troops and supplies to any point that might be menaced, in sufficient force for its defence.

So much for the powers of the General Government to aid in carrying on its own operations to render effective the Army and Navy for the defence of the country, and to facilitate the mail service.

But the other power conferred on Congress, viz: "to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States," is sufficiently broad to cover all the objects embraced in this bill, and is deemed by some of the ablest statesmen of the country to be the true ground, on which to rest these appropriations. This is certainly a very broad power, and at the Chicago Convention, in which eighteen States were represented without distinction of party, it was unanimously resolved that this grant of power accompanied by contemporaneous history and a series of acts which have received the sanction of the people of the United States, and of every department of the National Government, was sufficient to make it the constitutional duty of Congress to continue this system of appropriations. (See House doc. No. 741, July 11, 1848, p. 86.)

This power "to regulate commerce" has received a liberal and beneficial construction by all the departments of the Government.

The Supreme Court, in the case of *Gibbons vs. Ogden*, (9 Wheaton's Reps. p. 1,) have decided that the power to regulate commerce includes the power to regulate *navigation* on all the navigable waters, bays, lakes, rivers, and harbors throughout the United States, without any restraint or hindrance by State legislation. Honorable A. Conklin, district judge for the northern district of New York, held that this power was broad enough to authorize Congress to pass the act granting admiralty jurisdiction to the district courts upon the lakes and navigable rivers connecting the same, in respect to all steamboats and vessels of twenty tons burden and upwards employed in commerce and navigation, the same as upon the high seas. (See Conklin's Admiralty Practice.)

Under this power Congress has passed laws requiring steamers and vessels to be licensed and registered—prescribing their tiller ropes, authorizing an inspection, and requiring a lantern to be hung at their bows. Can the same power which prescribes all those artificial safeguards for the protection of life and property, consistently disclaim all jurisdiction over the natural obstacles and dangers of the lakes and rivers themselves?

Sir, this Government, in providing for "the common defence" and promoting the "general welfare" of the United States "as one country," under the Constitution, have authorized and prosecuted four kinds of public works which may be classed under the general head of *internal improvements*.

1. The erection, support, and maintenance of light-houses, light-ships, beacons, buoys, and public piers.

2. The improvements of the navigation of rivers, lakes, and harbors.

3. Making surveys and charts to guide the mariner in the navigation of the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, gulfs, bays, harbors, lakes, and rivers.

4. Roads and canals.

These improvements are necessary to enable the Government to perform its own appropriate functions, and were so considered by the fathers of the Republic. At the first session of Congress at New York, in 1789, it became the duty of its members "to make laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States." Now, what did this Congress do? What laws did it pass to give *practical effect* to the provisions of the Constitution? The ninth act which passed this Congress was approved by George Washington, August 7, 1789, and is entitled "An act for the establishment and support of light-houses, beacons, buoys, and public piers." By this act it was expressly provided—

"That all the expenses which shall accrue from and after the fifteenth day of August, 1789, in the necessary support and maintenance and repair of *light-houses, beacons, buoys and public piers*, erected, placed, or sunk before the passing of this act at the entrance of or within *any bay, inlet, harbor or port* of the United States for rendering the navigation thereof safe and easy, *shall be defrayed out of the Treasury of the United States: Provided*, That such light-houses, beacons, buoys, and public piers, shall be ceded to and vested in the United States, by the State or States in which they are situated, together with the lands and tenements thereunto belonging, with the jurisdiction of the same."

And it was by that act made the *duty* of the Secretary of the Treasury to provide by contracts for rebuilding them when necessary, and for furnishing them with necessary supplies; and also, to agree for the salaries, wages, or hire of the persons appointed for the superintendence of the same.

By this act of the first Congress, approved by General Washington, the United States assumed jurisdiction and control over all the light-houses, beacons, buoys and public piers in the United States, the title and jurisdiction of which should be ceded to them by the States in which they were situated. They were placed under the charge of the Secretary of the Treasury, and the faith of the Federal Government was pledged to maintain and support them forever afterwards; and this pledge, in respect to the light-house establishment, has been kept good by the Government. I have looked over the appropriation bills from the passage of that act to the present time, embracing a period of seventy years, and find that in every year there has been appropriations not only for those for which they were pledged to support, but for all the light-houses, light-boats, beacons, buoys, &c., that have since been authorized by law.

The first Congress also made it the *duty* of the Secretary of the Treasury, by the same law, to provide by contract for building a new light-house near the entrance of the Chesapeake Bay. At the next session of Congress, in 1790, he was authorized to finish the light-house on Portland Head, and at the same session the *annual* appropriations in the civil and diplomatic bill were commenced for the "support of light-houses, beacons, buoys, and public piers," and have been *annually* continued, without the omission of a single year, from that time to the present.

These appropriations have been embraced in the general appropriation bills, and have therefore been

as permanent and uniform as the appropriations for the support of the Government.

LIGHT-HOUSE ESTABLISHMENT.

For 1790* (estimated amount)	\$15,000 00
1791*.....do.....	15,000 00
1792 the amount was.....	16,000 00
1793.....do.....	20,000 00
1794.....do.....	20,000 00
And for deficiency in 1792	4,000 00
For 1795 the amount was.....	24,000 00
1796.....do.....	24,000 00
1797.....do.....	47,769 14
1798.....do.....	43,255 12
1799.....do.....	44,281 08
1800 General appropriation bill.....	39,392 03
1801.....do.....	38,622 70
1802.....do.....	44,841 44
1803.....do.....	50,970 82
1804.....do.....	55,951 33
1805.....do.....	115,209 36
1806.....do.....	81,088 02
1807.....do.....	83,961 08
1808.....do.....	85,000 00
1809.....do.....	79,039 40
1810.....do.....	68,131 04
1811.....do.....	68,965 39
1812.....do.....	93,100 16
1813.....do.....	99,349 15
1814.....do.....	69,100 28
1815.....do.....	24,299 11
1816.....do.....	97,464 00
1817.....do.....	73,493 33
1818.....do.....	60,236 00
1819.....do.....	74,362 27
1820.....do.....	120,863 00
1821.....do.....	102,341 28
1822.....do.....	91,531 30
1823.....do.....	102,441 65
1824.....do.....	109,774 33
1825.....do.....	117,485 85
1826.....do.....	132,346 66
1827.....do.....	158,650 00
1828.....do.....	166,444 00
1829.....do.....	42,000 00
1829....Second do.....	134,473 00
1830.....do.....	186,003 13
1831.....do.....	193,156 00
1832.....do.....	205,778 00
1833.....do.....	231,850 00
1834.....do.....	251,726 71
1835.....do.....	268,152 59
1836.....do.....	279,986 07
1837.....do.....	298,050 00
1838.....do.....	356,863 00
1839.....do.....	394,331 00
1840.....do.....	431,987 26
1841.....do.....	484,072 00
1842.....do.....	459,826 41
1842.....Deficiency bill.....	196,994 27
1843 General appropriation bill.....	415,276 96
1844.....do.....	397,109 89
1845.....do.....	394,808 06
1846.....do.....	421,732 04
1847.....do.....	402,325 80
1848.....do.....	473,254 27
1849.....do.....	478,633 33
1850.....do.....	516,497 41

* The exact amount appropriated for this purpose by the act of August 12, 1790, and the act of February 12, 1791, does not appear in the acts themselves, but appears in the accounts of the Secretary of the Treasury.

The following additional light-houses, beacons, &c., were authorized during General Washington's administration :

In 1792, appropriations were made to finish the light-house on *Bald Head*, at the mouth of the Cape Fear river; floating beacons and buoys in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina; three floating beacons in the Chesapeake bay; and a light-house on Montauk point. In 1793, a beacon or buoy was authorized on Smith's Point, in the Chesapeake bay, and the like on Royal Shoal, near Ocracoke inlet. In 1794-'5-'6 and '7, General Washington also approved bills for buoys on

the rocks off New London; a beacon and two buoys in the harbor of Portsmouth; light-house at Cape Hatteras; a lighted beacon on Shellcastle Island, North Carolina; light-house near the Kennebeck river; a beacon and three buoys at the entrance of St. Mary's river; light-house at the entrance of the harbor of Georgetown, South Carolina; buoys in Cape Fear river; light-house on Baker's Island, near Salem, Massachusetts; light-house on Cape Cod, and sixteen buoys in Boston harbor.

I have gone into this detail of facts for the purpose of proving conclusively that the *practical men* during Washington's administration, conspicuous in forming the Constitution, and who gave a *practical* construction to it during the first eight years after its adoption, fully established the *principle* of making appropriations from the National Treasury to facilitate, protect, and foster the commerce and navigation of the country.

During the next four years, from 1797 to 1801, this system was carried forward under the administration of John Adams, in the same manner as it was under the previous administration of Washington; new light-houses, buoys and beacons were authorized and the *annual* appropriations were continued in the general appropriation bill for the support of the light-house establishment.

From 1801 to 1809, Thomas Jefferson, who is claimed to be the great apostle of Democracy and liberty, was at the head of the Government. The chairman of the committee who reported the bill under consideration, [Mr. McLANE,] alluded very briefly to the fact that Thomas Jefferson, the great apostle of Democracy, did by his approval of bills for internal improvements, support this system, although he expressed doubts respecting its constitutionality. But in order to bring this matter more clearly to the committee, I take the liberty of referring to some *facts* connected with his Administration. He is, however, regarded as good authority on all doubtful constructions of the Constitution. Although, in one of his messages, he thinks it desirable that there should be an amendment of the Constitution, giving more enlarged powers on this subject, to make expenditures "*within the States*;" yet in every year he approved bills for some or all of these works of internal improvement. In each year he approved the annual appropriation bill for the support of the light-house establishment. He also approved bills for the erection of new light-houses, beacons, buoys, and *public piers*.

Mr. BURT, (interrupting.) Will the gentleman from New York allow me to make a single remark?

Mr. SPAULDING. Certainly.

Mr. BURT. If the gentleman addressed his remarks to me, I have only to ask him if he has read the messages of Jefferson?

Mr. SPAULDING. I have.

Mr. BURT. I will ask the gentleman if he has read the message of 1806?

Mr. SPAULDING. I have. [Laughter.]

Mr. BURT. Then I ask the gentleman from New York if, after reading that message, he makes the statement which he has just made to this committee?

Mr. SPAULDING. I do. [Great laughter.]

Mr. BURT. Then I have nothing further to say.

Mr. SPAULDING. I will say to the gentleman from South Carolina, [Mr. BURT,] that I stated at the commencement of my remarks that Mr. Jefferson questioned the constitutionality of making these appropriations; yet while he was questioning this power he approved three very important bills to carry forward the great system of internal improvements for which we are now contending. I look to his public and *official acts* for a just exposition of his principles, and especially to his views respecting those works of *national importance* in which *more than one State* has a common interest. Sir, gentlemen may write messages, make speeches, pass resolutions, and even give pledges as to their principles and course of future action, but, after all, the best test of fidelity of any man to his principles is his *official votes*, and the signature of the President to the bills that are made the law of the land by such official acts. I will therefore refer to the acts of Congress, passed during Mr. Jefferson's administration, to ascertain what principles were established by him.

At the first session of Congress after his inauguration, an act was passed authorizing the erection of "certain light-houses, and for other purposes." The first section of this act authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury "to purchase for the use of 'the United States the land whereon stood the 'light-house on Gurnet Point, and so much land 'adjoining thereto as may be sufficient for vaults 'and any other purposes necessary for the better 'support of said light-house.'"

The second section authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to rebuild the light-house on Gurnet Point, at the entrance of Plymouth harbor.

The *third* section authorizes him to rebuild the light-house on Newcastle Island, at the *entrance* of Piscataqua river.

The *fourth* section authorizes him to cause to be erected a light-house on Lynd's Point, at the *mouth* of the Connecticut river.

The *fifth* section authorizes "proper light-houses 'to be built, and buoys to be placed in the stations 'necessary for the *navigation* of Long Island 'Sound: *Provided*, That sufficient land for the accommodation of such light-houses can be purchased at a reasonable price; and that the Legislatures of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York shall respectively cede the jurisdiction over 'the same to the United States.'"

The *sixth* section authorizes a "sufficient light-house" to be erected on Cumberland Island, at the mouth of St. Mary's river, in Georgia.

The *seventh* section appropriates \$21,270 to accomplish the objects specified in the preceding sections.

The *eighth* section is in these words:

"SEC. 8. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be lawful for the Secretary of the Treasury, under the direction of the President of the United States, to cause to be expended in repairing and erecting PUBLIC PIERS in the river Delaware, a sum not exceeding \$30,000, and that the same be paid out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated: *Provided*, That the jurisdiction of the site where any such piers may be erected shall be first ceded to the United States, according to the conditions in such case by law provided.

"Approved April 6, 1802. TH. JEFFERSON."

So, sir, it will be seen that Mr. Jefferson, as early as 1802, approved a bill in *principle* essentially like the harbor and river bill now under consideration. Sir, six distinct objects, extending from

Massachusetts to Georgia, are embraced in this bill. It is what my friend from Louisiana [Mr. MORSE] would call a "log-rolling" bill, and yet there can be no doubt each object is of *national importance*; and I think Mr. Jefferson was clearly right in approving it, and that he forfeited none of his claims upon the Democracy for this official act.

But, sir, this is not all. Mr. Jefferson enlarged and extended the system of internal improvement beyond the limit it had been carried under Washington and Adams.

CUMBERLAND ROAD.

On the 29th March, 1806, Mr. Jefferson approved the bill for the *commencement* of the Cumberland road, from Cumberland, in the State of Maryland, across Pennsylvania and a part of Virginia, to Ohio, and the sum of \$30,000 was appropriated to commence the work. Since that time (including the sum appropriated by that bill) no less than \$1,921,227 81 has been appropriated to complete this road from Cumberland to the Ohio river at Wheeling. For the continuation of this road west of Wheeling through the State of Ohio, \$2,081,008 36 has been appropriated. For the continuation of the same through Indiana, \$1,135,000; and for its continuance through the State of Illinois, \$746,000; making in all the sum of \$5,883,236 17.

In Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, it is usually called the "national road;" being of national importance for the intercourse between our citizens east and west of the Alleghany mountains, and the easy and rapid transmission of the mails, I trust, sir, that the Democracy will not repudiate their great apostle for commencing an important national work requiring so large an expenditure.

In 1807, Congress passed an act making provision for surveying the coast of the United States, and made an appropriation of \$50,000 for that purpose. It was approved on the 10th of February, 1807, by Mr. Jefferson. The bill authorized the survey of all the harbors and inlets on the coast of the United States within twenty leagues of the coast. Now, what was the object of this bill? It was for the express purpose of favoring the commercial interests of the United States, and by the fourth section, \$50,000 was appropriated for that purpose. Now, this system of surveying the coast, harbors, and lakes, commenced at this time, and since that time an appropriation has been made almost yearly—last year an appropriation was made for the coast survey.

Now, then, I will go further; I will go so far as to say that Mr. Calhoun—of whose memory I speak with entire respect—in a report made whilst Secretary of War, under the Administration of the illustrious Monroe, in the year 1819, went so far as to express himself in favor of the construction of roads and canals.

On the 4th April, 1818, the House of Representatives passed a resolution instructing Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of War, to report at the next session "a plan for the application of such means as are within the power of Congress for the purpose of opening such roads and canals as may deserve and require the aid of Government," &c. In his report he says:

"A judicious system of roads and canals constructed for the convenience of *commerce* and the transportation of the mail only, without any reference to military operations, is itself among the most efficient means for the more complete defence of the United States. Without adverting to the

fact that the roads and canals which such a system would require, are, with few exceptions, precisely those which would be required for the operations of war, such a system, by *consolidating the Union*, increasing our wealth and fiscal capacity, would add greatly to our resources in war." * * * "Thus circumstanced, it is the *duty* of Government to render it as secure as possible."

These were sound views expressed by Mr. Calhoun at that time. I respectfully commend the whole of that able report to the gentleman from South Carolina, [Mr. BURT.]

These appropriations were continued during the administrations of Madison, Monroe, and John Q. Adams, down to the inauguration of General Jackson, March 4, 1829. At the first session of Congress under General Jackson's administration, a harbor and river bill was passed containing appropriations for twenty-two separate objects, similar in principle and detail, to the bill now before the committee. This bill was approved by President Jackson April 23, 1830; and during his administration he also approved the following harbor and river bills:

On the 2d March, 1833, a bill containing appropriations for *thirty-one* separate works. On the 2d March, 1833, a bill for improving the navigation of certain rivers in Florida and Michigan. In this bill is an item of "\$5,000 for improving the navigation of Choctawhatchie river *for the transportation of the mails* from Pensacola to Tallahassee." And on the same day he approved the harbor and river bill, containing *thirty-two* separate items. On the 28th June, 1834, he also approved the harbor and river bill for that year, containing *thirty-three* separate works; and on the 30th of the same month a *separate* bill for the Hudson river alone, appropriating \$70,000. On the 30th March, 1835, he also approved the harbor and river bill of that year, containing *twenty-one* separate items; on the 2d July, 1836, the harbor and river bill, containing *thirty-nine* separate works; and on the *last night* of General Jackson's official life he approved three bills in which the following sums were appropriated:

In the river and harbor bill.....	\$1,917,188 00
For the Cumberland and other roads.....	227,496 63
Light-house bill.....	721,694 00
Annual expenses of light-houses, &c., for the year 1837, contained in the general appropriation bill.....	311,255 00
Coast Survey.....	60,000 00

\$3,237,633 63

Approved by General Jackson, March 3, 1837.

Sir, President Polk, in his veto message, which has been so much lauded by the gentleman from Louisiana, [Mr. MORSE,] has made the unfounded statement that it required the strong arm of General Jackson to arrest the extravagance of these appropriations, which had grown up under the administration of John Quincy Adams; and yet the facts show that the system was greatly extended during General Jackson's administration beyond that of Mr. Adams, the same as it was during Mr. Jefferson's administration beyond that of Washington and the elder Adams.

The appropriations during the four years of John Q. Adams's administration were....\$2,310,475
Andrew Jackson's eight years.....10,582,882

Sir, I am well aware that General Jackson vetoed the Maysville road bill on the ground that it was a *local* work; but that had no reference to these great works of *national* importance; and the

best evidence we have that General Jackson had not changed his views in respect to works of a *national character* is, that after that veto, and among the very last of his official acts, he approved bills of this kind appropriating the large sum of \$3,237,633 63.

Sir, Mr. Van Buren promised to walk in the footsteps of his "illustrious predecessor;" but, sir, his foot was not long enough, nor broad enough, to cover the whole ground occupied by General Jackson. He did, however, in the first year of his administration, make a very fair attempt to redeem his pledge, so far as it related to internal improvements. At the first session of Congress under Mr. Van Buren's administration, a river and harbor bill was passed, and approved by Mr. Van Buren July 7, 1838, appropriating.....\$1,489,507 53
Bill for Red river raft..... 70,000 00
Cumberland Road, &c..... 459,000 00
Roads in Florida..... 37,300 00
do. in Wisconsin..... 44,000 00
For light-house establishment, contained in the general appropriation bill..... 356,863 00
Coast survey, do. do..... 90,000 00
Light-house bill, for new light-houses, &c... 340,395 33

First year of Mr. Van Buren's administration..\$2,887,065 89

No further river and harbor bill was passed during Mr. Van Buren's administration. The system was arrested, and in 1839-'40, the tools, machinery, materials, &c., then on hand to complete the works in progress on the lakes, were sold at a great loss, and the system of harbor and river improvements to a great extent abandoned.

During Mr. Tyler's administration only one harbor and river bill received his approval, which was June 11, 1844. After the passage of this bill there was a partial resumption of the works; but during that year Mr. Polk was elected President, which put an end to all hope of accomplishing anything during his administration. It is true that Congress endeavored to do its duty by passing river and harbor bills, but in every instance President Polk either vetoed or pocketed the bills, and thus one man was able to thwart the popular will and stop all these important works.

From an able and interesting report, made at St. Louis, by Thomas Allen, Esq., one of the executive committee of the Chicago Convention, many facts were stated which are very important in showing how much was lost to the country by arresting these works in this arbitrary manner. I am indebted to this report for the following facts:

"Prior to 1838 six steam snag boats had been constructed, at an average cost for each of about \$25,000—for six boats \$150,000. During the same period eight or nine small steam boats belonging to the Government were employed in the same service. One hundred thousand dollars was appropriated by Congress 'for building and repairing the necessary boats and for carrying on the improvement of the Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio and Arkansas rivers.' Captain John W. Russell was appointed the agent of the United States, and the boats having been repaired at St. Louis, the work of removing snags was recommenced in December of that year, and continued until April 17, 1843, when they were suspended by high water, but resumed in August following. Congress appropriated for the eighteen months ending June 30, 1844, \$50,000, up to which time the works were continued."

Soon after this, the Administration was changed by the election and inauguration of James K. Polk. Congress continued to do its duty by passing the necessary appropriation bills, but the President interposed his veto. All these valu-

able improvements upon the western rivers were stopped, and the snag boats sold at a sacrifice.

Colonel Long, of the corps of Topographical Engineers, estimates the cost of constructing a snag-boat, to be used upon the Mississippi and its branches, at \$25,000, exclusive of rigging, tools, and other equipments. The estimated cost of working them, as follows:

Employment of four snag-boats nine months, at \$2,160 per month each boat.....	\$77,760
Repairs and outfits of the same, &c.....	6,000
Employment of two steam machine-boats, nine months, at \$1,100 per month each boat.....	19,800
Repairs, &c., of the same.....	3,000
Construction of two small steam-boats, or transports, of light draught, to serve as tow-boats, tenders, &c., in the service, at \$8,000 each.....	16,000
Employment of same nine months, at \$800 per month.....	14,400

Amount for four snag boats, nine months service..\$136,960

These boats were of simple construction, yet of sufficient power to remove the most formidable snags in the Mississippi river with facility in a few minutes. The boats then in use having been sold, it will be necessary to construct new boats to carry on the improvements in the Western rivers.

Sir, the suspension of this great system of internal improvements, and the consequent loss of life and property, and the damage sustained by our commerce, admonishes us of the necessity of resuming these important improvements, and of making the system as permanent as the Government itself. The appropriations should be as regular as the annual appropriations for the support of Government; and I do not see the least objection to putting the appropriations for the continuance of all works, *heretofore authorized by law*, in the general appropriation bill.

Sir, the appropriations should not only be annually made until the improvements are fully completed, but they should afterwards remain under the constant supervision of some competent agent of the Government, to maintain and keep them in repair.

When any light-house, pier, or breakwater is constructed on the borders of, or within, any State, the title and jurisdiction of the land upon which each improvement is made should be ceded to the United States, so that the Government shall not only have the right to the possession, but the absolute responsibility and duty of keeping and maintaining them in good repair and condition, to answer the purposes for which the improvements were made. As to all *new works*, I think it would be desirable that they should be commenced in separate bills, as heretofore proposed by the Hon. J. A. Dix, in order to secure a thorough examination, to ascertain beforehand that the work proposed is of sufficient national importance to warrant Congress in assuming jurisdiction and control over it, as a Government work, before it is adopted as such. To elucidate these views more fully, I will take a practical illustration. The improvement of the *St. Clair Flats* is of sufficient national importance to enforce upon the General Government the duty of immediately deepening and improving the channel in a manner sufficient to make the navigation safe and easy through this thoroughfare of commerce. This duty is not only admitted by all the people of the seven States bordering upon this obstructed channel, but it is recommended by Government officers who have made

an examination and report on this subject.* The proposed improvement has never been adopted by Congress, and no appropriation has as yet been made. It now comes before us as a new improvement, to be adopted as a national work. We go through all the forms of passing a law authorizing the improvement to be made, and we propose to appropriate the sum of \$40,000 to commence the work. To make the adoption by the United States effectual, so that its duty be fully discharged, let us provide in the same law that the sum of \$20,000 shall be appropriated annually, until there shall be a navigable channel through the entire bar sufficient to pass all the vessels navigating these waters, and the work is fully completed. The appropriations may then be continued from year to year in the general appropriation bills till the work is finished. This would give permanency to the system, and without that the labor and materials of one Administration is liable to be lost by the caprice or party prejudice of the one which succeeds it.

I trust I shall be pardoned by the committee if I make some allusion to the harbor within my own district, and in which I feel an especial interest. The harbor at Buffalo is of great national importance. It is the principal commercial depôt of the great valley of the lakes above Niagara Falls; the great mart and port of transshipment for at least eight of the northwestern States and Territories, and the western terminus of the Erie Canal, three hundred and sixty-five miles in length, connecting these lakes with Hudson river. It was made a port of entry and a collection district by act of Congress in 1805, and has since that time been under the jurisdiction of the United States.

The land for light-house, &c., was deeded to the United States in 1819. The aggregate value of the property shipped east and west through the port of Buffalo alone, during the last season, was about \$70,000,000—equal to one half the entire foreign export trade of the whole Union. The total number of arrivals and departures was eight thousand four hundred and forty-four, and the tonnage of the same, two million seven hundred and thirteen thousand seven hundred. No appropriation for this harbor has been made since 1844. The Government pier, which protects the entrance, and resting on land belonging to the United States, has been greatly damaged by storms. The severe gale which occurred in 1844, broke through the pier, and it has only been partially repaired.

*The late Captain Williams, of the Topographical Corps of Engineers, who made an examination in 1841, says:

"Another point of great interest is the obstruction to navigation at the mouth of the St. Clair river. The river forms a delta, having three principal outlets—the north, middle, and south channels—and one or more intermediate passages. The general thoroughfare at present is by the north channel, the middle channel not having sufficient water on the bar for the draught of steamboats and the larger class of lake vessels. By a cut through of no great length, (by dredging,) a channel may be effected, it is thought, and a distance saved of upwards of six miles. * *

"The importance of some improvements being made here to facilitate commercial operations cannot be too strongly recommended. I will repeat the remarks alluded to: 'That vessels are frequently detained here, and that steamboats have to be lightened of a portion of their cargoes before they are enabled to pass over the bar. A small expense would obviate the difficulty and facilitate a thoroughfare of commerce, having for its object the intercourse between the waters of the Mississippi and the great emporia of our northeastern States, and all the great interests bordering on this channel of communication.'"

Since that time, it is no uncommon sight to see half a dozen loaded vessels sticking fast on the bars, which have been forming around the light-house at the end of the Government pier, at the mouth of the harbor. The appropriation contained in the bill for this harbor is only \$50,000. This is but a small item when compared with the extent of its commerce, and the relation it bears to all the other harbors upon the lakes. I would by no means desire to diminish the amounts for the other ports; but rather that the amount for Buffalo should be increased. I am gratified to see that Oswego and Rochester, important ports upon Lake Ontario, are provided for in the bill; and that Dunkirk, Erie, Cleveland, Sandusky, Milwaukie, and Chicago, have not been overlooked.

In 1834, the appropriation for the Hudson river was in a separate bill; but as it is the great channel through which is transported the principal imports to, and exports from, the lake region, as well as Upper Canada, I trust that the item of \$75,000 for this river, contained in it, is not now in the "wrong bill." On looking at the items for the Valley of the Mississippi, I see in the bill, for the Ohio river, above the Falls, \$80,000, and below these Falls, at Cumberland Island, \$50,000; and for the Mississippi, Missouri, and Arkansas rivers, \$240,000. I also see that the bill contains appropriations for the ports on the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico. Indeed, I may say that all sections of the country seem to have been fairly considered by the committee; and although I should be gratified to see some of the items increased, yet I fully believe the committee have done what was for the best, and I hope the bill will pass.

The revenues derived from commerce were, upon the adoption of the Constitution, surrendered to the General Government, "to provide for the common defence, to promote the general welfare, and to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." The Government collect large revenues on imports at the several ports embraced in this bill. While thus enjoying the revenues derived from commerce, there must be a reciprocal duty on the part of the Government, to facilitate, protect, and foster the hand that supplies it with the means of support.

In the last year of General Jackson's administration the appropriations to these objects were over \$3,000,000, and in the first year of Mr. Van Buren's administration they were rather less than \$3,000,000; but the average of these two years was about \$3,000,000.

In resuming these works again, it seems to me that if the Government were pledged to expend \$3,000,000 annually for ten years in a systematic and vigorous prosecution of these works, it would not only be a great saving of time and money over the former mode of prosecuting them, but would add greatly to the facility and protection of commerce; to the defence of the country, by enabling it to transport men and munitions of war; facilitate the intercourse of our citizens, and the speedy transmission of the mails.

In reply to the suggestion of the gentleman from Louisiana, [Mr. MORSE,] that to pass bills like these will tend to weaken the bonds of the Union, I take leave most respectfully to dissent from that opinion. I believe that every dollar expended in perfecting this system of internal improvements

will have the contrary effect from that predicted by the gentleman from Louisiana. Sir, the construction of the Cumberland Road, extending, as it does, from Maryland, through Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, has greatly increased the commerce and intercourse between Baltimore and the great West, and Baltimore has been much benefited by the increased trade and business that has been drawn to it. It has increased the facility of the mail service, and has increased the attachment of the people, east and west of the mountains, in all the States through which this road passes.

Sir, the Mississippi and its tributaries, extending through the whole valley of the Mississippi, forming twenty thousand miles of navigable communication, and finding an outlet in the Gulf of Mexico, improved, as it must be, by the General Government, will forever bind all that immense region together by kindred, by social intercourse, and by commercial relations. They all have a common interest in its waters, and in its free and unobstructed navigation from its sources to its mouth. No line east and west across the valley of the Mississippi ever should be allowed to separate a people bound together by so many cords of interest and attachment, and I trust and believe that no such line ever will be drawn.

At the last session Congress granted a right of way and made large donations of land to the States of Illinois, Mississippi, and Alabama, to aid in the construction of a railroad from Chicago to Mobile. If this road is constructed, as I trust it will be, it will increase the social intercourse and commercial interests between the North and South, and will tend to consolidate the Union more closely. There will not only be an iron band, extending across several States, but a bond of sympathy and interest growing out of the increased intercourse between the people of these States, which is far better. This was one of the reasons which influenced me to vote for that bill, and which would induce me to vote for other improvements of the same character.

The marine disasters and losses on the Lakes, for the last *three* years, have been as follows:

1848..Loss of property, \$420,512; of lives...	55
1849...do.....do..... 368,171;...do.....	34
1850...do.....do..... 558,926;...do.....	395

\$1,347,609. No. lives..484

Making an aggregate loss of property of \$1,347,609; and of lives, 474. This great loss is mainly for the want of good harbors of refuge and shelter on the lakes between Buffalo and Chicago. The annual loss of life and property on the Mississippi and its tributaries is much greater. The loss of property upon the lakes and rivers cannot be less than \$2,000,000 annually, which is annihilated—blotted out of the wealth of the country, for the want of proper care and attention on the part of the Government. I am aware that the destruction of human life upon our navigable waters is not entirely chargeable to the want of the improvements provided for in this bill. Fearful losses have occurred by fire and other casualties, but this does not lessen the responsibility and constitutional duty of the Government for the losses that occur by reason of snags in the rivers and the want of adequate harbors upon the lakes. Shall this frightful

destruction of human life go on and increase with the increasing business and population of the country? We have the means in the Treasury to remedy these evils to a great extent. We have the constitutional power to do it; we have the exam-

ples of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, and Jackson, in the precedents to which I have referred, for the exercise of that power, and I trust we shall now follow those precedents by the passage of this bill.

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